

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 OMB-01 EUR-25 DRC-01 SY-04 /134 W

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P R 100903Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4785

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 4481

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJ: ARREST OF BISHOP CHI

REF: A. SEOUL 4403 B. SEOUL 4439

1. FATHER BRANSFIELD, AN AMERICAN PRIEST CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH BISHOP CHI AND THE CHRISTIAN WORKERS MOVEMENT, TOLD EMBOFF THAT CARDINAL KIM MET EVENING OF JULY 9 WITH GROUP OF KOREAN AND FOREIGN PRIESTS AND TOLD THEM OF ROKG CHARGES AGAINST THE BISHOP AND INTENT TO TRY HIM. THE BISHOP HAD ADMITTED GIVING FUNDS TO SOME STUDENT LEADERS, BUT DENIED THAT HIS INTENTION HAD BEEN TO PROMOTE VIOLENCE OR

REVOLUTION. HOWEVER, THE BISHOP DURING 36-HOUR INTERROGATION CONTINUED TO REAFFIRM THAT HE WAS FIGHTING:

- A. FOR DEMOCRACY AS THE SOLE TRUE BULWARK AGAINST COMMUNISM;
  - B. FOR THE RIGHT TO DISSENT; AND
  - C. AGAINST CORRUPTION, ESPECIALLY DIVERSION OF CHURCH FUNDS FROM SOCIAL PROJECTS WITH CONNIVANCE OF GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY. LAST POINT REFERS TO SOME \$25,000
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WHICH BISHOP GAVE TO WONJU RADIO STATION FOR PROMOTING

EDUCATIONAL AND INFORMATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR WORKERS AND POOR. BUT THIS PROGRAM HAS NEVER BEEN REALIZED AND BISHOP HAS BEEN UNABLE TO OBTAIN REFUND FROM STATION.

2. CARDINAL, ACCORDING TO BRANSFIELD, INFORMED PRIESTS OF HIS EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF BISHOP, INCLUDING EFFORT TO GET HIM TRANSFERRED OUT OF PRISON. NONETHELESS, THE CARDINAL SAID ROKG INTENDS TO TRY BISHOP. CARDINAL AUTHORIZED PRAYER MEETINGS ON JULY 10, AND A BIG RALLY IS TO BE HELD AT MYONG-DONG CATHEDRAL AT 1800. AUTHORITIES AWARE OF MEETING, BUT HAVE SPECIFIED ONLY THAT NO PICTURES BE TAKEN.

3. GROUP OF PRIESTS TOLD CARDINAL THAT CHURCH COULD NOT KEEP QUIET ON THE ARREST OF BISHOP CHI AND HAD MORAL OBLIGATION TO MAKE STATEMENT. THE CARDINAL, IN TURN, ASSURED THEM THAT HE WAS AWARE OF THIS AND THAT THE BISHOPS' CONFERENCE WOULD ISSUE A STATEMENT ON THE CASE.

4. ACCORDING TO SOGANG UNIVERSITY SOURCE, THE CARDINAL IS TO MEET AFTER PRAYER MEETING WITH BISHOPS, MAJOR SUPERIORS, AND FOREIGN PRIESTS AND SISTERS TO DISCUSS CASE OF BISHOP CHI.

5. FATHER BRANSFIELD ALSO TOLD EMBOFF THAT OF THE SEVEN DEFENDANTS ON COURT-MARTIAL TRIAL, FOR WHOM PROSECUTOR HAD ASKED DEATH SENTENCE, FOUR WERE FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES OF BISHOP CHI. HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES WERE GREATLY CONCERNED THAT THE ROKG MAY USE THE DEATH PENALTY AS BARGINING WEAPON IN ORDER TO SILENCE CHURCH AND OBTAIN FREE HAND FOR DEALING WITH BISHOP CHI CASE. HOWEVER, EMBASSY SO FAR HAS NO CONFIRMATION THAT ROKG INTENDS TO USE THREAT OF DEATH SENTENCE FOR BARGAINING PURPOSES.

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